

ceutical workers, and the increasing hazards due to radiation in many industries. Any one of these experiments, which are unintentionally performed in the course of industrial development, might yield valuable clues as to the underlying processes involved.

There is much to be accomplished in cancer control, however, with the knowledge already at our disposal. An important step has been taken along this line in the joint preparation by the N.C.I. and the A.C.S. of a new film on "Breast Self-Examination." Studies made by the National Cancer Institute have shown that this disease (which claims 20,000 victims each year) is strikingly amenable to early treatment. If the condition is diagnosed while still localized, the probability of survival for one year or more is 94 per cent, while, if diagnosis is delayed, the figure drops to 48 per cent. Dr. A. V. Deibert has estimated that if women examined their own breasts once a month, this disease could be greatly minimized.

Here then is a case where the key to control is in the hands of the women themselves. A new film on this subject, first shown at San Francisco last June, is endorsed by all the leading authorities in this field. Mutual promotional plans are being developed by the N.C.I. and the A.C.S. to utilize the machinery of the Field Army, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and other organizations of adult women to further the showing of this film. It is hoped that it can be brought to small communities and rural areas by the 23,000 public health nurses of the country; and every effort will be made to mobilize both official and voluntary nursing agencies in securing their coöperation with this end in view.

1. Mayers, M. R. *Monthly Review*, Division of Industrial Hygiene, New York State Department of Labor 29:13 (Apr.), 1950.

NUTRITIONISTS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

RECENT announcements of the establishment of a certifying board in human nutrition¹ have given rise to the question as to how far such certification will go in separating the sheep from the goats in the ranks of nutritionists. In making a place for themselves in public health, nutritionists have had to create an awareness, in the minds of both their professional colleagues and the public, of the difference between nutritional knowledge and practices based on scientific research and the much more glamorous pronouncements and activities of self-designated experts. They have taught that the best single index of the reliability of nutrition information is to be found in the qualifications of the person responsible for it and that an individual who is affiliated with a reputable professional organization is considered as qualified by a jury of his peers. At the present time, there appear to be in the United States five nutrition organizations in which membership connotes professional standing. What members of these organizations do in a specialized field of public health, and what they say in both their scientific papers and their popular interpretations, deserves consideration if not blind acceptance.

The new *Specialty Board in Human Nutrition* should serve as a "Who's Who" for top-flight research workers in human nutrition, for heads of departments in medical schools and schools of public health, and for highly specialized staff positions in the military and civil branches of government. Other affiliations may have as much or more significance for certain kinds of public health positions.

The *Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council* is made up of members "selected by the National Research Council on the basis of demon-

strated leadership in the science of foods and nutrition. They are chosen especially for those qualifications which enable them to interpret the results of food and nutrition research in terms of its broad applications and implications in national and world affairs."²

Membership in the *American Institute of Nutrition* connotes standing as a research worker but not necessarily in *human* nutrition.

Membership in the *American Dietetic Association* means a bachelor's or advanced degree from an accredited college or university with basic academic work in foods and nutrition, plus completion of an internship approved by the Executive Board of the Association.³

A nutritionist who is a Fellow of the *American Public Health Association* has been vouched for by the Council of the Food and Nutrition Section as having attained a recognized professional standing in that branch of public health before his application received favorable action by the Governing Council.

Identification with whichever of the above associations stands for leadership in a particular corner of the nutrition field carries with it some assurance of technical competence and professional responsibility. But there are other nutrition organizations with names fully as long and impressive. On investigation some of these high-sounding names have proved to be merely a front for a one-man outfit engaged in propaganda and sales promotion. Some are proponents of raw milk and are otherwise at odds with accepted public health and nutrition teaching, even though their membership may be drawn largely from the medical and dental professions.

What should be the attitude of public health workers toward these organizations of unaccredited status? This is a practical question for administrators reviewing the applications of prospective staff members and for all who try to know something of the information to which the public is exposed through newspapers and magazines, the radio, and television. Those who have attained a certain mellowness in their judgments tend to pass off as unimportant membership in one unaccredited group on the part of an individual who is also associated with an organization of unquestioned repute. There is always the possibility that he is a habitual "joiner" or that he signed up in the hopes of reforming from within. An unknown society may be an exclusive group of specialists which will one day make an important contribution to public health. It is equally likely that it is an aggregation of enthusiasts unhampered by the disciplines of science. If a public health worker stakes his reputation as a nutritionist on identification with an unrecognized association, the burden of proof would seem to rest with him.

1. *A.J.P.H.*, Aug., 1950, p. 952.

2. Voris, Le Roy. The Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council. *Nutritional Observatory*, 9, 3:43-48 (July), 1948.

3. The American Dietetic Association, Jan., 1950, 20 pp.